

ADDITIONAL FEE:

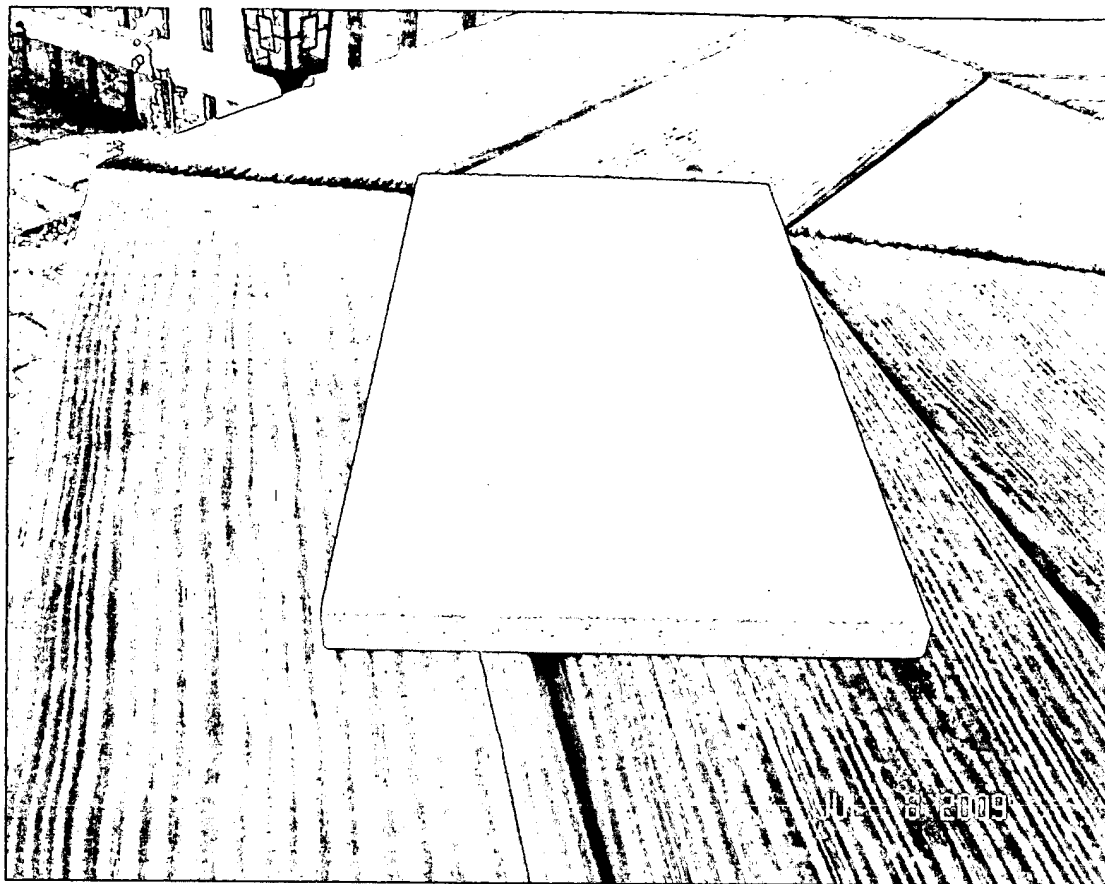
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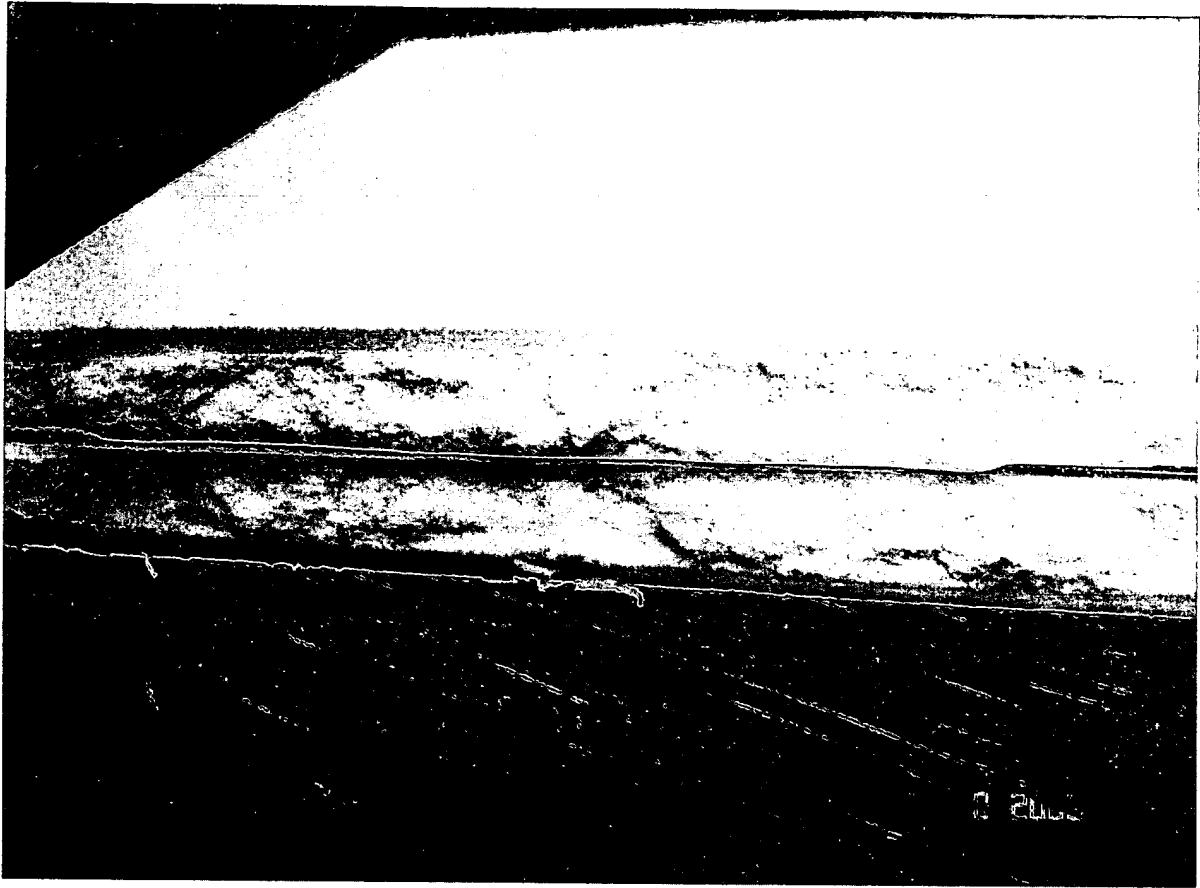
R E M A R K S

The Office Action issued April 15, 2009, has been received and its contents have been carefully noted.

Claim 1 has been amended to more particularly point out and distinctly claim the structure of the integral foam board. In particular, the foam board is now recited as having a coarsely porous core, sealed and smoothed sides and, due to the manufacturing method of the present invention, at least one sealed and smoothed side edge.

Support for this description may be found on page 1 of this application, which describes an integral foam board with a "core with its coarse porosity" and surfaces which are manufactured "pore-free and with great luster." An example of this type of board is shown in the following two photographs. The first photo shows a thermoplastic board with a smoothed top surface and a smoothed side edge (facing toward the viewer). The second photo shows the internal structure of the board with the coarse pores.

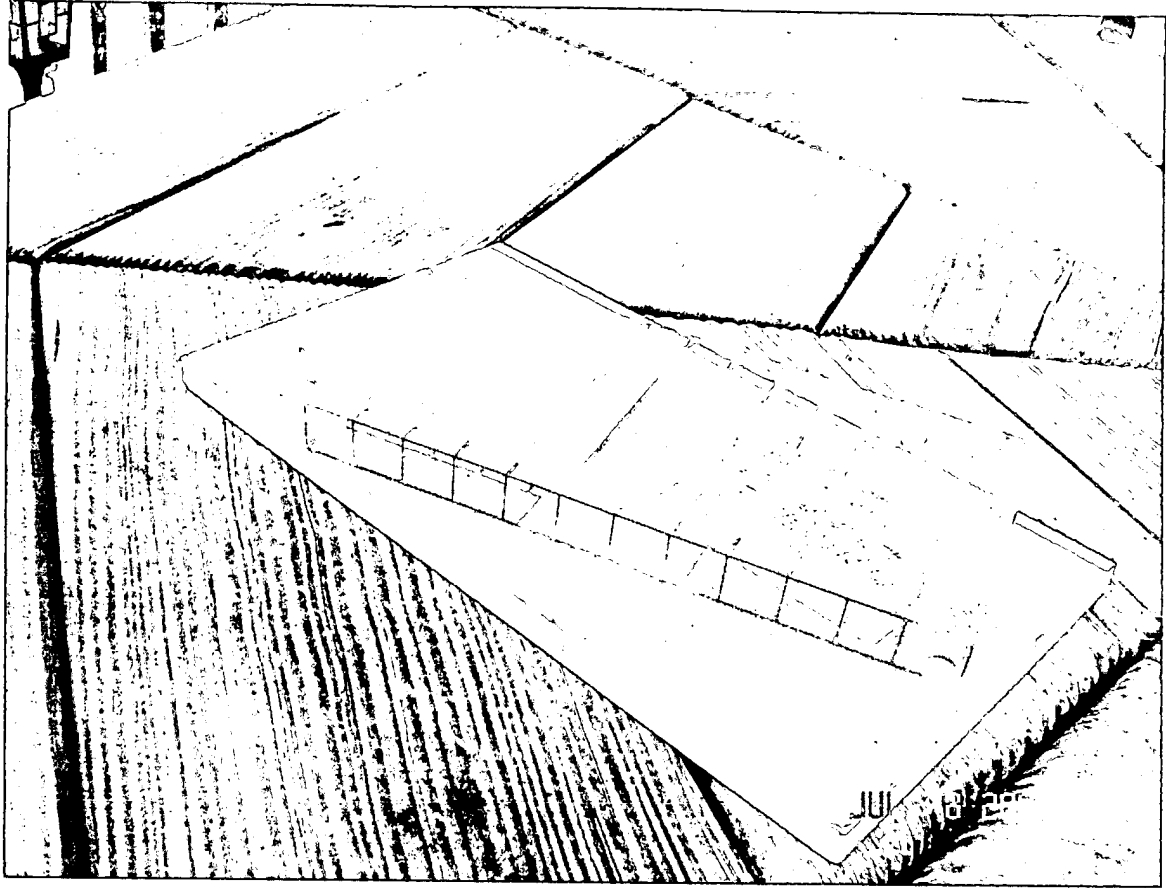


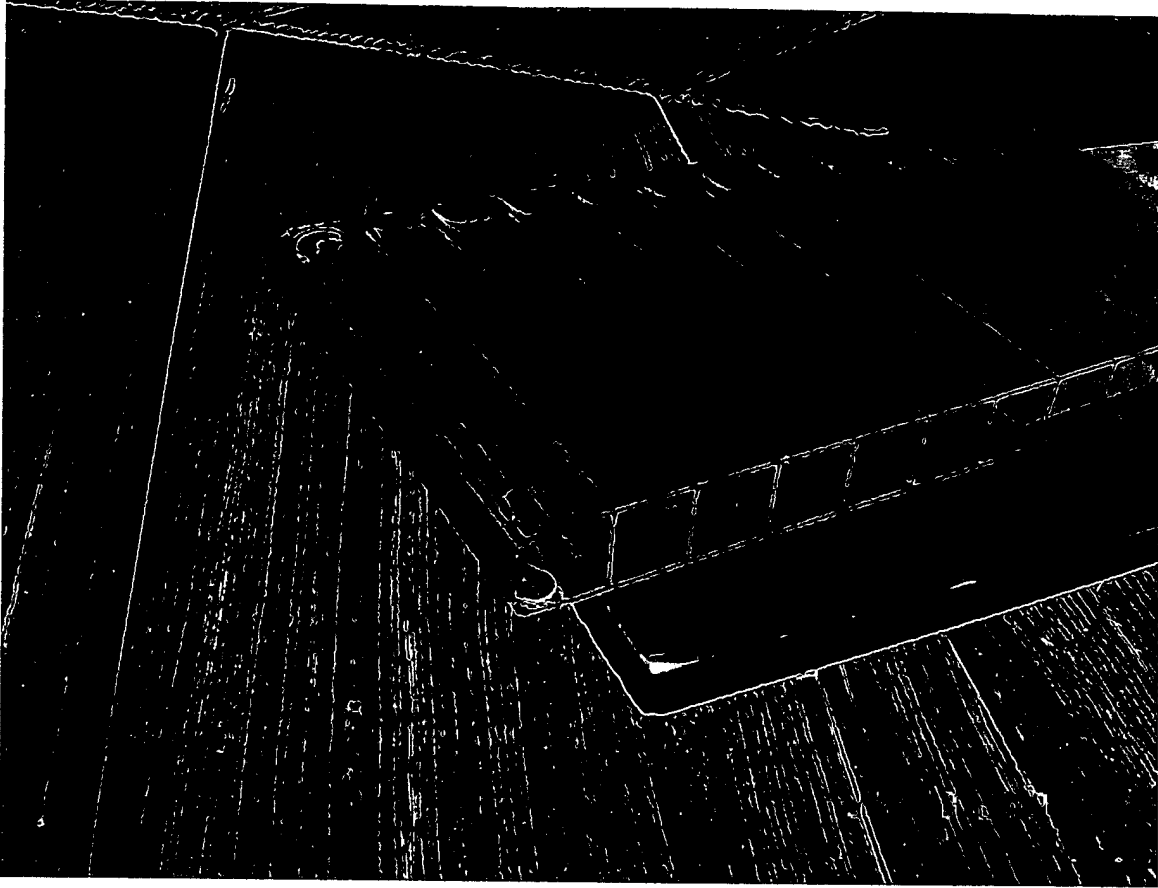


Claim 1, the only independent claim in this application, has again been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102, as being anticipated by the published European patent application to Bressan. As the Examiner understands, Bressan discloses a method and apparatus for "thermoforming" products made from "continuous, aveolate sheets or panels." Such sheets have a unique structure which is not at all analogous to the coarsely porous, integral foam boards that are the subject of the present invention.

Set forth below are two photographs of such an aveolate sheet or "board." As may be seen, this board consists of two thin planar sheets, top and bottom, spaced apart and held together by vertical risers or walls which form relatively large cavities between them. The plastic or cardboard material used to form the planar sheets and the risers is solid, rather than foam-like, and does not contain pores that require closing and smoothing.

The first photo, reproduced below, shows the general structure of the aveolate sheet while the second is a close-up of one side edge.





Claim 1 has been amended to specifically recite that the method according to the invention effects a smoothing and sealing of the coarsely porous core at "at least one side edge." This method is thus specifically directed to the integral foam board of the type described above and shown in the first two photos.

Although the method and apparatus of Bressan are superficially similar to that of the present invention, a detailed consideration reveals important differences. Column 5, lines 1 - 15, describes the edge forming operation of Bressan as follows:

"Sheet 1 is then passed along forming assembly 12, better shown in Fig. 7, which by means of this shaped sections 13 and 13' joins by contact softened edges 4 and 4', thus closing the side edge of alveolate sheet 1. The alternative embodiment of Fig. 8 shows assembly 12 provided with ducts 14 and 15 conveying cooling air from duct 35 towards sheet 1 so that the heating action of assembly 6 does not impair the evenness of sheet surfaces and the alveolate cavities adjacent to the outer edge to be treated. According to this embodiment, assembly 12 is formed of two specular halves 12a and 12b, the distance of which can be adjusted in order to adapt forming assembly 12 to the different thickness of the semifinished product 1."

In other words, the two exposed ends 4 and 4' of the top and bottom sheets, respectively, of the aveolate board are bent toward each other and connected by heating. As the Examiner will understand, this is a completely different operation than the edge forming method of the present invention which requires smoothing and sealing a porous synthetic material.

In conclusion, therefore, applicants respectfully submit that the method and apparatus of Bressan cannot and does not anticipate the present invention. Bressan's method and apparatus are directed to a different type of board than the present invention and consequently differ markedly in the way they form an edge.

Bressan's method and apparatus also do not make obvious applicants' method for forming an smooth, sealed edge. A person skilled in the art would surely not look to Bressan's technique for connecting edge elements 4 and 4' when searching for a solution to the problem of smoothing and sealing the edge of a porous substrate.

Accordingly, claim 1, as now amended, is believed to distinguish patentably over Bressan and is therefore believed to be allowable. Claims 2 and 4 are dependent from claim 1 and recite further features in addition thereto and are therefore believed to be allowable as well.

Since this application is under Final Action, applicants submit herewith a Request for Continued Examination (RCE) so that the amendments to claim 1 may be considered by the Examiner.

This application is now believed to be in condition for immediate allowance. A formal Notice of Allowance is accordingly respectfully solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

By

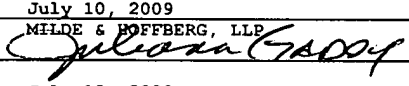

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